

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD

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Investigation of:

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UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD COLLISION

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GRANITE CANYON, WYOMING

* Accident No.: RRD19FR001

OCTOBER 4, 2018

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Interview of: KRISTIN RODY
Dispatcher

Via Telephone

Saturday,
October 6, 2018

APPEARANCES:

TED T. TURPIN, Railroad Accident Investigator
National Transportation Safety Board

DONALD MAI, Operating Practices Safety Inspector
Federal Railroad Administration (FRA)

JOHN ALLBERRY, General Director Safety
Union Pacific Railroad

BRIAN FRANSEN, Primary Investigator
Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers & Trainmen
(BLET)

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I N T E R V I E W

MR. TURNIP: So my name is Ted Turpin. We're conducting an interview in connection with an accident that happened near Granite Canyon, Wyoming, on October 4th, 2018. The accident number is RR19FR001 [sic]. Today is October 6, 2018, and we're at the Plains Hotel in Cheyenne, Wyoming. We're interviewing the train dispatcher that worked on the Green River side of Cheyenne.

So if you could start just by saying your name and spelling it, please?

MS. RODY: Kristin Rody, K-R-I-S-T-I-N, R-O-D-Y -- D as in dog.

MR. TURPIN: Alright. Thank you. And I'll go around the room later. I'm not going to do that to you right at this second, so --

MS. RODY: Okay.

INTERVIEW OF KRISTIN RODY

BY MR. TURPIN:

Q. First off, just start and tell us what happened.

A. What -- I don't know how far back do you want me to go, but --

Q. Wherever you want to pick.

A. With the emergency calls, is that where you want me to start?

Q. Sure. Start there, and we'll start fleshing it out either way.

A. Okay. The red light went off, so I answered the emergency

1 call. It was on the Buford Tower. So I answered the radio as how
2 we're supposed to, and they had -- I don't remember verbatim what
3 they had said, but they had made a comment about their air and it
4 wasn't what they -- the crews normally -- normally when they have
5 a comment about their air it usually implies that they're in UDE,
6 and so I thought that's what they were implying. But I knew
7 something was different because they didn't say what they normally
8 say, and so I had to clarify. So I asked him, are -- something's
9 wrong with your air or are you in UDE? I said something along
10 those lines. And he confirmed, no, we're not in UDE; we've lost
11 control of our train or we've lost our brakes or something along
12 those lines.

13 So then I did my emergency broadcast over the radio on the
14 Buford Tower. I grabbed my emergency book and I went through the
15 process, followed the steps there. And the emergency light had
16 gone on off on the Sidney sub, dispatcher 15's desk as well. So
17 he was kind of listening to me, and when he heard my -- do my
18 emergency broadcast, he kind of stood up and looked at me. And I
19 said -- told him which train it was and it was headed his way. So
20 then he started to do the emergency broadcast on his side, on his
21 channels.

22 And then I think -- I don't know how -- I think everybody
23 heard around us, and everybody kind of came down and was assisting
24 us. Then CTDs and the managers and superintendents were in our
25 cubicles within seconds and minutes, and we just kept doing the

1 emergency broadcasts. And I checked back in with the train after
2 doing that a few times, asked them if there was any change, if
3 they were able to regain control of their train, and they had told
4 me they could not, they had not, and they told me the speed. I
5 don't remember what it is now, but they had told me they had
6 picked up speed and told me where they were going, and I don't
7 recall what that was now. And so I had told what that was to the
8 managers and the superintendent and the dispatchers next to me to
9 give them an update, and we just kept following procedures.

10 Q. Very good. So what's your designated number, train
11 dispatcher number?

12 A. On that desk? Fourteen.

13 Q. You're 14? And go towards Cheyenne is 15, right?

14 A. That's dispatcher 15, correct.

15 Q. Okay. Thanks. Do you remember what -- we're going to get
16 the tapes, but I'm just curious -- what you actually said? You
17 said emergency three times?

18 A. You just say emergency, emergency, emergency; uncontrolled
19 movement headed east, main track 1. And I -- CPW530, and you say
20 that several times.

21 Q. Okay. All right.

22 A. Uh-hum. Um-hum.

23 Q. Also on the tape we're going to have time frame, but do you
24 have a sense of how long from the very first call?

25 A. Until when?

1 Q. Until they no longer responded to you.

2 A. Oh, probably just minutes.

3 Q. Okay. But you were able to converse with them during that
4 time?

5 A. I didn't very much, no, because we were doing the emergency
6 procedures there and I was doing the emergency broadcast. And I
7 did check back with them to see if they regained control of their
8 train and they had said no. That was -- and then it was over.

9 Q. And that'll be on the tape. Thank you. That's --

10 A. Yeah.

11 Q. That's fine.

12 A. Uh-hum.

13 Q. So you're -- when the crews push the button on their
14 locomotive for an emergency call, then you get it lit up and that
15 designates the actual tower?

16 A. Correct. The red light goes off and then on my AVTEC screen
17 the channel that I'm to answer flashes so I know which one to
18 answer.

19 Q. Okay. How many of those are on your district?

20 A. How many towers?

21 Q. Yes.

22 A. Oh, I don't know by heart. Eight maybe? I don't know by
23 heart.

24 Q. That's fine. That's fine. Six to 10, 8. Okay.

25 A. Yeah. Yeah.

1 Q. That's fine. Who calls the actual emergency responders and
2 reaches out to local people?

3 A. In the case of a rollout or a runaway train the procedure is
4 that the corridor manager does, in that case.

5 Q. Okay. And is that what happened?

6 A. Yeah, that's what's stated in the emergency -- we follow the
7 emergency protocol in our book. Yeah, and the corridor manager
8 called the RMCC.

9 Q. Okay. All right. Very good. I appreciate -- by the way, I
10 know this is difficult to replay.

11 A. Yeah.

12 Q. But we're here and trying to figure out what happened so we
13 can --

14 A. Yeah. Yeah.

15 Q. -- prevent from happening again.

16 A. Yes, I understand.

17 MR. TURPIN: All right. So I think right now I'll just go
18 around the rest of the room and see if anybody has any questions.

19 MS. RODY: Okay.

20 MR. ALLBERRY: So Kristin, this is John Allberry.

21 MS. RODY: Yes.

22 BY MR. ALLBERRY:

23 Q. So do you remember -- and like Ted's been saying, we'll get
24 all the voice tapes so if you don't remember, it doesn't matter.
25 Do you remember if --

1 A. Okay.

2 Q. -- the crew told you that they had placed their train in
3 emergency or --

4 A. I don't think that they did, no. But I don't recall -- I
5 don't, I don't believe they did, no, but I don't remember for
6 certain.

7 Q. Okay. That's --

8 A. I believe they just called and they said something about
9 their air, and I remember thinking it was strange what they said
10 because it's not what the train crews normally tell me when they
11 go into emergency, or UDE. So I remember thinking, well, that's
12 strange and I needed to clarify. So I said, so are you in UDE;
13 are you in emergency? I had to clarify with them. And they --
14 and then that's when they had told me, no, we're not; we lost
15 control of our train or we have no brakes or something along those
16 lines.

17 Q. Okay. And --

18 A. And then that's -- and that's when I knew I needed to do my
19 emergency broadcast.

20 Q. Yeah. Do you remember if you or your counterpart on the
21 other desk, the 15 desk, do you remember if either of you guys
22 instructed any of the other trains in the areas to stop or get off
23 or -- I mean, do you know how that worked? Or did they just take
24 it upon themselves? Or how did that go?

25 A. I believe -- I never instructed anybody to get off any train.

1 I just did my emergency broadcast. I'm not sure what dispatcher
2 15 said or didn't say.

3 MR. ALLBERRY: Okay.

4 MR. TURNIP: That's it?

5 MR. ALLBERRY: Yes.

6 MR. FRANSEN: Hey, Kristin. I'm Brian Fransen.

7 BY MR. FRANSEN:

8 Q. My question is: It's your territory, under your control all
9 the way from Rawlins to where this accident occurred; is that
10 correct? I mean it's -- you go --

11 A. Well, where it happened is -- it's shared territory. The
12 last control point that I controlled was 536, and that's where
13 they called me.

14 Q. Okay.

15 A. And then it's shared territory, and then the first control
16 point that dispatcher 15 controls is W530, and the accident
17 occurred east of that.

18 Q. From between Rawlins and the accident, had they contacted you
19 at all at any time and said anything about air problems, or
20 anything like that?

21 A. No. The first interaction I had with the crew was just
22 barely west of Cheyenne, and they had called regarding their work
23 event at Laramie, or -- excuse me -- just west of Laramie. And it
24 was regarding their work event that they had at Laramie, and they
25 didn't say anything about any issues with their train. We were

1 discussing the bad weather and their work event at Laramie, but
2 there was no report of any issue with the train or -- nothing.

3 MR. FRANSEN: Okay. That's all I've got. Thank you.

4 MS. RODY: Uh-hum.

5 MR. MAI: Kristin, Don Mai, with the FRA.

6 BY MR. MAI:

7 Q. When the crews work Laramie, can you --

8 A. Yes.

9 Q. -- ever hear them on the radio doing their work?

10 A. Yeah, if you monitor -- well, if they're on the radio and
11 you're listening to the radio, yeah. But I was not monitoring the
12 radio while they were doing their work.

13 Q. Okay. So you didn't hear them -- anything about what they
14 were doing at Laramie, other than when you talked to them prior to
15 there, about the work, right?

16 A. Correct. The only time I interacted with them while they
17 were doing their work is when they would call for a signal.

18 MR. MAI: Okay. Thank you.

19 MS. RODY: Uh-hum.

20 BY UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER:

21 Q. Kristin, so at Laramie when they called, I assume they called
22 you and said we got picked up, we're ready to go?

23 A. Yeah, they called and needed a light back to their train out
24 of the Laramie Yard. So they went back to their train.

25 Q. Okay. And then --

1 A. And then they call and say they're ready to go, yeah.

2 Q. Okay. And when they were called and said they were ready to
3 go, were you able to take them right away or did you have to --

4 A. No. I had to get two eastbound Z trains, UPS trains past
5 them, and then I gave them a light up 2 track.

6 Q. Got you.

7 A. Um-hum.

8 MR. TURPIN: This is Ted Turpin.

9 BY MR. TURPIN:

10 Q. Did they encounter any other traffic after they left Laramie?

11 A. No. I let two Z trains go past them, and the two Z's went up
12 3 main. And then there was one more Z, so I had a conversation
13 with them about if they're ready to go and if they would take the
14 light, you know, things like that, if I let them go up 2 track.
15 Because I had another UPS train coming but, I wanted to get them
16 started. So I gave them a light up 2 track in front of the third
17 Z train, to get them started up the hill. So that was my only
18 conversation with them, when they left was, you'll see two Z's go
19 down past you, down 3. And then I talked to them again and said,
20 here, I'll get you started up 2 track now, and then that third Z
21 will come by you on 3 track; you'll see him come by you up there
22 at Hermosa. And they said it wouldn't be any issue; they're heavy
23 and slow and they would watch for that third one. And that was --
24 still no complaint about their train or any issues; no issues were
25 reported or anything.

1 Q. This really doesn't pertain, but just for my own knowledge.
2 So the three -- so, in total, three eastbound Z trains. Did you
3 take all three of those around that PCNP2, or not? I would
4 assume.

5 A. I'm --

6 Q. Yeah, I guess you would've had to if you activated
7 (indiscernible) --

8 A. Yeah. I did, I did. Yes.

9 Q. Yeah. Okay.

10 A. Yeah.

11 MR. MAI: Kristin, Don --

12 MS. RODY: Up at Hermosa or at Dale I did, yeah.

13 MR. MAI: Kristin, Don Mai, with the FRA.

14 MR. MAI: Where did the train that did the work at Laramie,
15 where did he cross back over to 1 at?

16 MS. RODY: I believe it's CPW547 at Hermosa, at the tunnels.

17 MR. MAI: Okay. Thank you.

18 MS. RODY: Uh-hum.

19 MR. TURPIN: This is like bombarding you.

20 MR. MAI: Well, that's --

21 MS. RODY: It's okay.

22 MR. MAI: Kristin, actually it's because we're all
23 railroaders and we've all ran trains, and we're thinking, man, get
24 me around this train, you know.

25 MS. RODY: Yeah, yeah.

1 MR. TURPIN: Yeah. So this is Ted again.

2 BY MR. TURPIN:

3 Q. When did you start your shift?

4 A. At 1420 Central Time.

5 Q. I don't have the times. Was this train on your territory
6 already?

7 A. Yes.

8 Q. Okay. So you didn't see him come out of Rawlins?

9 A. No, I did not. He was just coming into Laramie. He was just
10 -- I don't remember how many miles out, but almost to Laramie. He
11 arrived at Laramie pretty close to the beginning of my shift.

12 Q. Okay. That gives me a good frame of --

13 A. Yeah, just -- he was just west of Laramie when I started my
14 shift.

15 Q. So you said you were talking about the weather. What was
16 going on with the weather?

17 A. He -- the crew called when they were just shy Laramie and
18 talking about doing their work at Laramie with the weather; there
19 was a lot of rain and lightning and wind. And the previous
20 dispatcher had talked to them about using the hand-throw and
21 unlock switch, and they were wondering if they could just use
22 signals into the yard rather than using the unlocks. And so I
23 said yes, if that was the safer route, yes.

24 Q. Uh-hum.

25 A. So then I had a conversation with them, is it even safe to do

1 your work at all; do we need to highball the work, kind of a
2 thing. Let me know when you get to Laramie, what you think. And
3 I would talk to the corridor manager and we will figure out if
4 it's safe to do the work or not. And then by the time that we
5 talked again at Laramie and that I had talked to the corridor
6 manager, the storm had passed and the crew had said it was safe to
7 do their work but that they would still like to use the signals
8 rather than the hand-throw.

9 Q. Okay.

10 A. So we did it -- so we -- they said it was safe to do the
11 work, so they did the work but they did use the signals, not the
12 hand-throw.

13 Q. Okay. Was there any reporting of freezing on the territory?

14 A. No. Just wind and rain, lightning; no freezing.

15 Q. I think those were warmer days than they are now, so --

16 A. Yeah.

17 MR. TURPIN: Okay. I'm pretty good right now. Anybody else
18 have anything?

19 MR. MAI: I'm good.

20 MR. FRANSEN: I'm good.

21 MR. ALLBERRY: I'm good, Kristin. Very well done, sounds
22 like.

23 MR. TURPIN: What I would like is -- well, I can get that, a
24 company email. I'll get a company email and I'll send you this
25 transcript so you can take a look at it.

1 MS. RODY: Okay.

2 MR. TURPIN: It takes a while. I probably won't return back
3 for about 3 weeks and then I'll send you an email.

4 MS. RODY: Okay. Okay.

5 MR. TURPIN: And you can change things in it that -- you
6 know, 1420 instead of 1410, or whatever, if it shows up, something
7 like that.

8 MS. RODY: Okay.

9 MR. TURPIN: I don't think there's going much vary. Pretty
10 clear.

11 MS. RODY: Okay.

12 MR. TURPIN: So thank you so much, Kristin.

13 MS. RODY: Okay.

14 MR. TURPIN: I'm sure you'll hear more of our work out here
15 and how we're progressing and --

16 MS. RODY: All right.

17 MR. TURPIN: -- (indiscernible) we'll tell you.

18 MS. RODY: Okay.

19 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Kristin, we really appreciate it,
20 especially when you're --

21 MS. RODY: Yep.

22 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: -- off time, for taking time to do
23 this.

24 MS. RODY: Yep. Thank you. Anything I can do to help.

25 UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: All right, bye-bye.

1 MS. RODY: Okay. Thanks. Bye.

2 MR. TURPIN: Bye.

3 (Whereupon, the interview was concluded.)

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CERTIFICATE

This is to certify that the attached proceeding before the

NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SAFETY BOARD


IN THE MATTER OF: UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD COLLISION
 GRANITE CANYON, WYOMING
 OCTOBER 4, 2018
 Interview of: Kristin Rody

ACCIDENT NO.: RRD19FR001

PLACE: Via Telephone

DATE: October 6, 2018

was held according to the record, and that this is the original,
complete, true and accurate transcript which has been transcribed
to the best of my skill and ability.

A solid black rectangular box used to redact the signature of the transcriber.

Katia Toniolo
Transcriber